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Creationism

Since Aristasians have a creation myth which they regard as true, and Dea is regularly defined as the Creatrix, it may be supposed that Aristasians are creationists. This is certainly true, but the term creationism needs to be defined in Aristasian terms in order to understand what Aristasians actually believe.

Dea as Creatrix

"Creatrix of the earth and of the Heavens" is one of the primary definitions of Dea, and Dea, both Filianist and Simple Deanist, often stress the Mother's role as Creatrix.

The primary reason for this in Telluria is as a doctrinal safeguard against the various "neo-pagan" and other "Goddess" cults that, saturated with post-rationalist materialism and psychologism, regard "the Goddess" as in some way an emanation or creation of maid.

A fundamental test of Deanic orthodoxy as opposed to materialist or psychist "Goddess-ism" is the question: "Did Dea create maid, or did maid create Dea?" Any ambiguity on this point is a sign of unsoundness. Only those who can freely and unequivocally assert that Dea is the Originating Principle: that She came first and maid - and the cosmos - exist solely as a result of Her are considered Deanists as opposed to "Goddess-bongos".

Creationism and Literalism

In Telluria, however, outside Deanic circles, "creationism" is often associated with an over-literal interpretation of a creation-mythos (usually that contained in the Hebrew *Book of Genesis*). Christian fundamentalists often pose creationism as an alternative to Darwinist evolutionism and the geological and other evidence of the age of the earth, stating such patent absurdities as that the earth is only approximately 4,000 years old.

No similar species of naïve or literalistic creationism is to be found among Aristasian Deanists. Although one particular creation story is known and used by Deanists in Telluria, others are known to exist which contradict it on points of "literal fact" (teaching, for example, that the world emerged from a great egg). Aristasians accept the differing accounts as equally true, because "literal (i.e. material) fact" is, by definition, not the subject of any creation mythos; for the creation of matter and time cannot itself be a material event in time.

The Creation tells not of the creation of a particular planet or a particular sun. It tells of the creation of the entire material cosmos - or rather of the entire cosmos, of which the material aspect is only one part, or phase. Since part of the creation story takes place "before" the creation itself, it follows that these pre-cosmic Events did not take place either in time or space, since they were the cause of time and space.

In other words, at the "time" of those events, time and space "did" not exist.

Note the inverted commas in the above paragraph. Their necessity indicates the fact that we cannot discuss events outside time and space without using temporal or spatial metaphors.

Are the creation stories, then, metaphors for pre-cosmic, "pre"-temporal - or extra-temporal, "extra"-cosmic - events? The Deanic answer (and the answer of any traditional culture) is "No". Metaphors are merely human devices. True Mythos tells us the precise Truth, but tells it in ways that we, as space- and time-bound creatures, can understand it.

In the words of a Filianic Scripture: "I have forged your words into a crystal mirror that they may reflect the Truth; and the words that are writ upon the Heaven are transcribed without fault upon the earth. "

The fundamentalist insistence upon taking literally (i.e. as material time- and space-bound statements) those things that simple logic tells us cannot possibly be taken in that way, stems precisely from the fact that fundamentalism, a late-19th-century development, came to birth in a world where traditional metaphysical understanding had already been lost. Fundamentalism was a brave, well-intentioned, but ill-informed attempt to redress the balance without access to the traditional "keys" that could unlock the real meaning of myth.

"Fundamentalists" were reacting against the oddly-named "higher criticism" - a grossly materialistic school whose precepts came to dominate Tellurian Universty theological faculties in the 20th century. This school attempted to "demythologise" Christianity and called into question the historicity of much of the Bible. Fundamentalists, instead of

"remythologising" their faith, simply contested the materialists on their own materialistic grounds and declared the whole Bible to be literally true.

While "mainstream" Tellurians like to portray fundamentalists as being naïve and ignorant, it is clear that naïveté and ignorance characterise both sides in this argument to equal degrees.

When a creation myth speaks of the creation of the sun and the earth, it is not referring to the formation of a particular star lighting a particular planet. It is speaking of the Supernal Sun, the Primordial Light, and of the plane of its radiance. Microcosmically this is reflected at one level as a particular star and a particular planet, just as, at another level, it is reflected as the human heart and the human body.

The dividing of the waters and the revealing of the earth between them does not refer primarily to the seas of a particular planet but to the primal "waters" of the all-potential *maya* from which every planet and every being has emerged.

The fundamentalist's tales of a 4,000-year-old earth are only slightly more risible than the materialist's reduction of all this to physical rocks and gasses.

Creation and Manifestation

When speaking of the *process* of the production and development of the cosmos, Aristasians tend to use the term "manifestation" rather than "creation".

Manifestation refers to the deployment of the possibilities latent in the Divine. Normally we think of this as being their deployment in time and space, but there are levels and modes of being other than the spatio-temporal: indeed, space-time is only one small part of total manifestaion. Once again, as with myth and metaphor, we can only discuss this in spatio-temporal terms because we are space- and time-bound creatures.

Manifestation, at every level is the "outward" movement of being from its Source in the Absolute. At every stage, manifestation entails a movement "outward" from the Centre so that all manifest things become progressively complex on the "horizontal" plane of material deployment and progressively distant from the "vertical" plane of pure spiritual Principle. It is because of this, for example, that the historical cycle proceeds downward from the first Golden Age or Satya Yuga to the final Age of Iron or Kali Yuga.

Ultimately the total cosmos is the out-breathing of the Dark Mother who is beyond being and unbeing, and, at the end of

time, all creation will be breathed back into Her. The cosmos is, in the final analysis, the "play" (*lila*) of Dea, whose "purpose" is beyond our understanding.

"Creation" is the expression of manifestation in Theistic terms and on the level of the personal Deity (God-with-form, *saguna brahman* - the Bright Mother as opposed to the unknowable Dark Mother).

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